

Edible Flowers in the Landscape – compiled by Rita Shimniok, sourced from here and there.

## IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS:

**BEFORE CONSUMING ANY PLANT OR FLOWER, CHECK WITH A MEDICAL OR PLANT PROFESSIONAL.**

**NOT EVERY FLOWER/PLANT IS EDIBLE – In fact, sampling some flowers can make you very, very sick.**

You also should **NEVER use pesticides or other chemicals** on any part of any plant that produces blossoms you plan to eat.

Never harvest flowers growing by the roadside.

Identify the flower exactly and eat only edible flowers and edible parts of those flowers.

Always remember to use flowers sparingly in your recipes due to the digestive complications that can occur with a large consumption rate. Most herb flowers have a taste that's similar to the leaf, but spicier. The concept of using fresh edible flowers in cooking is not new.

**Are you looking for more information on edible flowers? Check out these books on Amazon:**

[The Edible Flower Garden](#) by Rosalind Creasy

[Identifying and Harvesting Edible and Medicinal Plants](#) by “Wildman” Steve Brill with Evelyn Dean

[Edible Flowers: From Garden to Palate](#) by Barash, Cathy Wilkinson

## Start cooking with your own edible flowers

[Natures Blossom Edible Flower Grow Kit](#)

[Organic Culinary Lavender Flowers](#)

## How To Choose Edible Flowers – Edible Flower Chart:

**Begonia** – Tuberous begonias and Waxed begonias –

**Tuberous Begonias** (*Begonia X tuberosa*) – The leaves, flowers, and stems are edible. Begonia blossoms have a citrus-sour taste. The petals are used in salads and as a garnish. Stems, also, can be used in place of rhubarb. The flowers and stems contain oxalic acid and should not be consumed by individuals suffering from gout, kidney stones, or rheumatism.

**Wax Begonias** (*Begonia cucullata*) – The fleshy leaves and flowers are edible raw or cooked. They can have a slight bitter after taste and if in water most of the time, a hint of swamp in their flavor.

**Calendula** (*Calendula officinalis*) – Also called Marigolds. A wonderful edible flower. Flavors range from spicy to bitter, tangy to peppery. Their sharp taste resembles saffron (also known as Poor Mans Saffron). Has pretty petals in golden-orange hues. Sprinkle them on soups, pasta or rice dishes, herb butters, and salads. Petals add a yellow tint to soups, spreads, and scrambled eggs. Only the petals are edible.

**Carnations** (*Dianthus caryophyllus* – aka *Dianthus*) – Carnations can be steeped in wine, candy, or use as cake decoration. To use the surprisingly sweet petals in desserts, cut them away from the bitter white base of the flower. *Dianthus* are the miniature member of the carnation family with light clove-like or nutmeg scent. Petals add color to salads or aspics. Carnation petals are one of secret ingredients that has been used to make Chartreuse, a French liqueur, since the 17th century.

**Chrysanthemums** (*Chrysanthemum coronarium*) – Tangy, slightly bitter, ranging in colors from red, white, yellow and orange. They range in taste from faint peppery to mild cauliflower. They could be blanched first and then scatter the petals on a salad. The leaves can also be used to flavor vinegar. Always remove the bitter flower base and use petals only. Young leaves and stems of the Crown Daisy, also known as Chop Suey Greens or Shingiku in Japan, are widely used in oriental stir-fries and as salad seasoning.

**Clover** (*Trifolium* species) – Sweet, anise-like, licorice. White and red clover blossoms were used in folk medicine against gout, rheumatism, and leucorrhea. It was also believed that the texture of fingernails and toenails would improve after drinking clover blossom tea. Native Americans used whole clover plants in salads, and made a white clover leaf tea for coughs and colds. Avoid bitter flowers that are turning brown, and choose those with the brightest color, which are tastiest. Raw flower heads can be difficult to digest.

**Cornflower** (*Centaurea cyanaus*) – Also called Bachelors button. They have a slightly sweet to spicy, clove-like flavor. Bloom is a natural food dye. More commonly used as garnish.

**Dame's Rocket** (*Hesperis matronalis*) – Also called Sweet Rocket or Dame's Violet. This plant is often mistaken for Phlox. Phlox has five petals, Dame's Rocket has just four. The flowers, which resemble phlox, are deep lavender, and sometimes pink to white. The plant is part of the mustard family, which also includes radishes, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, and, mustard. The plant and flowers are edible, but fairly bitter. The flowers are attractive added to green salads. The young leaves can also be added to your salad greens (for culinary purposes, the leaves should be picked before the plant flowers). The seed can also be sprouted and added to salads. **NOTE: It is not the same variety as the herb commonly called Rocket, which is used as a green in salads.**

**Dandelions** (*Taraxacum officinalis*) – Member of the Daisy family. Flowers are sweetest when picked young. They have a sweet, honey-like flavor. Mature flowers are bitter. Dandelion buds are tastier than the flowers: best to pick these when they are very close to the ground, tightly bunched in the center, and about the size of a small gumball. Good raw or steamed. Also made into wine. Young leaves taste good steamed, or tossed in salads. When serving a rice dish use dandelion petals like confetti over the rice.



**Day Lilies** (*Hemerocallis* species) – Slightly sweet with a mild vegetable flavor, like sweet lettuce or melon. Their flavor is a combination of asparagus and zucchini. Chewable consistency. Some people think that different colored blossoms have different flavors. To use the surprisingly sweet petals in desserts, cut them away from the bitter white base of the flower. Also great to stuff like squash blossoms. Flowers look beautiful on composed salad platters or crowning a frosted cake. Sprinkle the large petals in a spring salad. In the spring, gather shoots two or three inches tall and use as a substitute for asparagus. **NOTE: Many Lilies contain alkaloids and are NOT edible. Day Lilies may act as a diuretic or laxative; eat in moderation.**

**English Daisy** (*Bellis perennis*) – The flowers have a mildly bitter taste and are most commonly used for their looks than their flavor. The petals are used as a garnish and in salads.

**Fuchsia** (*Fuchsia X hybrida*) – Blooms have a slightly acidic flavor. Explosive colors and graceful shape make it ideal as garnish. The berries are also edible.

**Garden Sorrel** (*Rumex acetosa*) – Sorrel flowers are tart, lemon tasting. So use like a lemon: on pizza, a salad topping, in sauces, over cucumber salads.

**Gladiolus** (*Gladiolus* spp) – Flowers (anthers removed) have a nondescript flavor (taste vaguely like lettuce) but make lovely receptacles for sweet or savory spreads or mousses. Toss individual petals in salads. It can also be cooked like a day lily.

**Hibiscus** (*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*) – Cranberry-like flavor with citrus overtones. Use slightly acidic petals sparingly in salads or as garnish. The flower can be dried to make an exotic tea.

**Hollyhock** (*Alcea rosea*) – Very bland tasting flavor.

**Honeysuckle** (*Lonicera japonica*) – Sweet honey flavor. Only the flowers are edible. **NOTE: Berries are highly poisonous – Do not eat them!**

**Impatiens** (*Impatiens wallerana*) – The flowers have a sweet flavor. They can be used as a garnish in salads or floated in drinks.

**Johnny-Jump-Ups** (*Viola tricolor*) – Lovely yellow, white and purple blooms have a mild wintergreen flavor and can be used in salads, to decorate cakes, or served with soft cheese. They are also a great addition to drinks, soups, desserts or salads.

**Lilac** (*Syringa vulgaris*) – The flavor of lilacs varies from plant to plant. Very fragrant, slightly bitter. Has a distinct lemony taste with floral, pungent overtones. Great in salads and crystallized with egg whites and sugar.

**Linden** (*Tilia* spp.) – Small flowers, white to yellow which are delightfully fragrant and have a honey-like flavor. The flowers have been used in a tea as a medicine in the past. **NOTE: Frequent consumption of linden flower tea can cause heart damage.**

**Marigold** (*Tagetes tenuifolia* – aka *T. signata*) – The marigold can be used as a substitute for saffron. Also great in salads as they have a citrus flavor.

**Nasturtiums** (*Tropaeolum majus*) – Comes in varieties ranging from trailing to upright and in brilliant sunset colors with peppery flavors. Nasturtiums rank among most common edible flowers. Blossoms have a sweet, spicy flavor similar to watercress. Stuff whole flowers with savory mousse. Leaves add peppery tang to salads. Pickled seed pods are less expensive substitute for capers. Use entire flowers to garnish platters, salads, cheese tortas, open-faced sandwiches, and savory appetizers.



**Pansy** (*Viola X wittrockiana*) – Pansies have a slightly sweet green or grassy flavor. If you eat only the petals, the flavor is extremely mild, but if you eat the whole flower, there is a winter, green overtone. Use them as garnishes, in fruit salads, green salad, desserts or in soups.

**Phlox, Perennial Phlox** (*Phlox paniculata*) – It is the perennial phlox, NOT the annual, that is edible. It is the high-growing (taller) and not the low-growing (creeping) phlox that grows from 3 to 4 feet tall. Slightly spicy taste. Great in fruit salads. The flowers vary from a reddish purple to pink, some white.

**Pineapple Guave** (*Feijoa sellowiana*) – The flavor is sweet and tropical, somewhat like a freshly picked ripe papaya or exotic melon still warm from the sun.

**Primrose** (*Primula vulgaris*) – Also known as Cowslip. This flower is colorful with a sweet, but bland taste. Add to salads, pickle the flower buds, cook as a vegetable, or ferment into a wine.

**Queen Anne's Lace** (*Daucus carota*) – Also known as Wild Carrot and Bishop's Lace. It is the original carrot, from which modern cultivars were developed, and it is edible with a light carrot flavor. The flowers are small and white, and bloom in a lacy, flat-topped cluster. Great in salads. **NOTE: The problem is, it is closely related to, and looks almost exactly like another wild**

plant, Wild or Poison Hemlock, which often grows profusely in similar habitats, and is said to be the most poisonous plant native to the United States. The best way to differentiate between the two plants is to remember that Queen Anne's Lace has a hairy stem, while the stems of Wild Hemlock are smooth and hairless and hollow with purple spots. Queen Anne's Lace also has a black eye in the center. The root, which is medicinal, smells like a carrot.

**Roses** (*Rosa rugosa* or *R. gallica officinalis*) – Flavors depend on type, color, and soil conditions. Flavor reminiscent of strawberries and green apples. Sweet, with subtle undertones ranging from fruit to mint to spice. All roses are edible, with the flavor being more pronounced in the darker varieties. In miniature varieties can garnish ice cream and desserts, or larger petals can be sprinkled on desserts or salads. Freeze them in ice cubes and float them in punches also. Petals used in syrups, jellies, perfumed butters and sweet spreads. **NOTE: Be sure to remove the bitter white portion of the petals.** [Rose Petal Jam](#) [Rose Petal Drop Scones](#) [Rose Petal Tea](#)

**Scented Geraniums** (*Pelargonium* species) – The flower flavor generally corresponds to the variety. For example, a lemon-scented geranium would have lemon-scented flowers. They come in fragrances from citrus and spice to fruits and flowers, and usually in colors of pinks and pastels. Sprinkle them over desserts and in refreshing drinks or freeze in ice cubes. **NOTE: Citronelle variety may not be edible.**

**It is generally safe to eat geranium leaves.** If it's a hardy variety like potted pelargoniums or apple-scented sanguineum then the leaves are not only edible but might also have more potent health benefits.

**Snap Dragon** (*Antirrhinum majus*) – Delicate garden variety can be bland to bitter. Flavors depend on type, color, and soil conditions. Probably not the best flower to eat.

**Sunflower** (*Helianthus annuus*) – The flower is best eaten in the bud stage when it tastes similar to artichokes. Once the flower opens, the petals may be used like chrysanthemums, the flavor is distinctly bittersweet. The unopened flower buds can also be steamed like artichokes.

**Sweet Woodruff** (*Galium odoratum*) – Also known as Wild Baby's Breath. The flower flavor is sweet and grassy with a hint of nutty, vanilla flavor. **NOTE: Can have a blood thinning effect if eaten in large amounts**

**Tulip Petals** (*Tulipa*) – Flavor varies from tulip to tulip, but generally the petals taste like sweet lettuce, fresh baby peas, or a cucumber-like texture and flavor. **NOTE: Some people have had strong allergic reactions to them. If touching them causes a rash, numbness etc. Don't eat them! Don't eat the bulbs ever. If you have any doubts, don't eat the flower.**

**Violets** (*Viola* species) – Sweet, perfumed flavor. Related flowers, Johnny jump-ups or violas, and pansies now come in colorful purples and yellows to apricot and pastel hues. I like to eat the tender leaves and flowers in salads. I also use the flowers to beautifully embellish desserts and iced drinks. Freeze them in punches to delight children and adults alike. All of these flowers make pretty adornments for frosted cakes, sorbets, or any other desserts, and they may be crystallized as well. Heart-shaped leaves are edible, and tasty when cooked like spinach.

**Yucca Petals** (Yucca species) – The white Yucca flower is crunchy with a mildly sweet taste (a hint of artichoke). In the spring, they can be used in salads and as a garnish.

Resources:

<https://brilliantgardener.com/are-geranium-leaves-edible>

<https://whatscookingamerica.net/edibleflowers/edibleflowersmain.htm>